

HOUSING AND HOME IMPROVEMENT SERVICES

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I. Statement of Purpose and Philosophy

Housing and Home Improvement Services is intended to enable older adults to secure and/or maintain maximum independence and dignity by helping older adults meet their basic need for adequate shelter. One of the basic needs of every older adult is to have adequate shelter. An elderly individual or couple may need housing that requires very little upkeep. Location near or with access to shopping facilities, church or recreation is a major concern for some older adults. Improvement of the home to meet basic safety needs can also be a major concern. Some older adults have a need for basic appliances and furnishings. The major need for physically handicapped older adults may be housing modifications and special design features which enable easy access. Many older adults need information about housing, housing financing alternatives and housing with service options.

II. Legal Base

Older Americans Act of 1965 as Amended: 42 U.S.C. 3001; Public Law 100-175, Section 321 (a) (4) (A-C), (5) and (14)

G. S. 143B-181.1 (c)

G. S. 143B-181.1 (a) (11)

III. Definition of Terms

- A. “Older adult” means an individual 60 years of age or older.
- B. “Own home” means that the individual is living in a residence he maintains for himself or is maintained for him by his caretaker. “Own home” does not include any group care.
- C. “Obtaining” under this service includes location of and negotiating for adequate housing or basic furnishings and arranging for relocation to other housing or for the movement of basic furnishings.
- D. “Retaining” under this service includes negotiating with individuals who have influence over or control of the individual’s ability to continue keeping his abode or his basic furnishings.

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- E. “Adequate housing” means a dwelling that is lawfully and reasonably sufficient to meet the needs of the individual and his family.
- F. “Basic furnishings” includes essential household items.
- G. “Basic appliances” includes items necessary for refrigerating or preparing food, or heating or cooling the home.
- H “Minor renovations and repairs” includes restoration of the dwelling so as to lessen risks to personal health and safety without including any structural change to the dwelling.

IV. Definition of the Service

Housing and Home Improvement Services means assistance to older adults in obtaining and/or retaining adequate housing and basic furnishings/appliances.

The service has three distinct elements. A provider(s) may be engaged to provide one, two or three of the following elements, depending on the needs of the community.

- A. Provision of one or more of the following counseling, advocacy and training activities from a competent provider to individuals and/or to groups:
 - 1. identify and remedy health risks and safety hazards in the home or on the property of the residence;
 - 2. improve landlord-tenant relations;
 - 3. identify substandard housing;
 - 4. secure correction of housing code violations;
 - 5. examine possible housing options, including those with associated services;
 - 6. find and relocate to more suitable housing;
 - 7. obtain or retain ownership of own home;
 - 8. examine alternative for financing of housing, including the use of reverse equity mortgages for the funding of other services or needs; and/or
 - 9. advocate for or work to develop needed housing options and related services when not available in the community.
- B. Provision of labor and materials for minor renovations

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are a risk to the personal health and safety of older adults or to enhance mobility for functionally impaired individuals. Such renovations and repairs may only be provided to renter occupied dwellings when this is not the responsibility of the landlord. These renovations and repairs may not be structural in nature. No repairs should be made to a rental unit unless a prior agreement from the landlord is secured agreeing not to increase rent due to improvements resulting from this service.

Specific types of renovations and repairs include but are not limited to the following:

1. installation of interior or exterior ramps;
2. installation of grab bars and other safety aids;
3. widening of doorway(s) for wheelchair;
4. repair/improve insulation;
5. repair windows or doors;
6. repair essential sinks, showers, tubs or commodes; and
7. repair of basic heating (furnace, fireplace, woodstove, etc.)

- C. Provision of basic furnishings and/or appliances to remedy deficiencies which pose a risk to the basic health and safety of the older adult. These may be provided to residents or renter occupied dwellings only when such appliances are not the responsibility of the landlord.

Specific examples of basic furnishings and appliances include but are not limited to the following:

1. bed, table and chair;
2. stove and refrigerator; and/or
3. heater, fan and air conditioner.

V. Client Eligibility for Service

Persons 60 years of age and older who meet the criteria for the target population are determined to be in need of the service and are eligible. Persons acting on behalf of an eligible older adult are allowed to be a direct recipient of counseling, advocacy and training.

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A. Target Population

Older adults needing one or more elements of the service (i.e., counseling, advocacy, training, renovations or repairs to dwelling, basic furnishings or appliances) to obtain or retain adequate housing that enables them to remain in, or return to, their own homes and alleviates risk to their personal health and safety.

VI. Service Cost-Sharing

The following Housing and Home Improvement service activities are subject to Service Cost-Sharing Policies and Procedures (individual counseling, home repair and appliance purchases). Service providers must, however, give all participants an opportunity to contribute to the cost of service. Cost-Sharing Policies and Procedures are outlined in the Division of Aging Home and Community Care Block Grant Procedures Manual for Community Service Providers.

VII. Documentation

A. Documentation of Service to Individuals

Each agency providing Housing and Home Improvement services to individuals must maintain an individual case file which captures the following information:

1. Client identification information;
2. Identification of client needs;
3. Documentation of actions taken regarding the client including documentation of plan to meet client needs, service denial or termination;
4. List of agency/agencies to whom the client was referred and dates;
5. Follow-up contacts made to/or on behalf of the client and dates contacts were made;
6. Purchase of goods or services on behalf of the client.

A client file is not required for those individuals who receive advocacy and counseling on behalf of an individual or when the service is delivered via telephone or written correspondence. A client intake form is required for all individuals served face to face.

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B. Documentation of Service to Individuals in Group Settings

Each agency providing Housing and Home Improvement services to groups of individuals must maintain a log which captures the following information:

1. Date service rendered;
2. Number of clients served;
3. Identification of clients needs; and
4. Description and purpose of the group activity.

VIII. Reporting and Reimbursement

A. Reporting

All providers, except local departments of social services, shall submit a Management Information System (MIS) Client Registration Form (DOA-101) for clients receiving Housing and Home Improvement services. The completed form (DOA-101) shall be forwarded to the Area Agency on Aging for entry into the MIS. If a local department of social services is administering the program, clients shall be registered via the DSS-2515 form and the information entered into the Services Information System (SIS).

Do not complete a Client Registration Form for individuals receiving the advocacy, counseling type activities which are provided in a group setting. Also, do not complete a Client Registration Form for those individuals who receive advocacy and counseling on behalf of an older adult or when the service is delivered via telephone or written correspondence.

In order to maintain accurate client data, agencies must conduct an update of client registration information every twelve (12) months, as appropriate. Depending upon the type of agency providing the service, information will be updated on either form DOA-101 or form DSS-2515 and entered into the appropriate information system. Agencies may update the information by telephone or in person. Only the signature of the agency staff person completing the update is required. Updated information must be documented in each client's record.

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B. Reimbursement

Services are reimbursed according to a total cost contract in accordance with the service budget included in the Home and Community Care Block Grant Funding Plan.

Designated community service agencies providing Housing and Home Improvement services shall request reimbursement for line item expenditures as specified in the Division of Aging Home and Community Care Block Grant Procedures Manual for Community Service Providers.

C. Maximum Rates for Reimbursement

1. Reimbursement is available for the cost of salary, fringe benefits and other administrative costs associated with the provision of Housing and Home Improvement Services.
2. Reimbursement is available for the costs of labor and/or material needed for renovations and repairs to the homes of eligible individuals under the following circumstances;
 - a. the renovations or repairs are minor and do not include any structural change; reimbursements are limited to a maximum of \$800.00 for labor and/or materials per area of repair; e.g., roof, bathroom, and
 - b. the costs are reasonable and necessary while ensuring quality work, and
 - c. the condition of the home is such that minor renovations or repairs will make the dwelling safe and healthy for the occupants.
3. Reimbursement is available for the purchase of new or used basic appliances or furnishings as long as they are in such condition that they meet the needs of the individual.

Specific procedures for reporting client data and service reimbursement information are outlined in the Division of Aging Home and Community Care Block Grant Procedures Manual for Community Service Providers.